

**Minutes of the Board of Commissioners
Multnomah Building, Board Room 100
501 SE Hawthorne Blvd., Portland, Oregon
Tuesday, February 12, 2013**

Board Briefings

Chair Jeff Cogen called the meeting to order at 11:02 a.m. with Vice-Chair Judy Shiprack and Commissioners Deborah Kafoury, Loretta Smith and Diane McKeel present.

Also attending were Jenny Morf, County Attorney and Lynda Grow, Board Clerk.

B.1 Informational Board Briefing on Child Hunger. Sponsors: Commissioner Deborah Kafoury, District 1 and Commissioner Diane McKeel, District 4. Presenters: Oregon's First Lady, Cylvia Hayes; Susannah Morgan, Executive Director, Oregon Food Bank (OFB); Patti Whitney-Wise, Executive Director, Oregon Hunger Task Force (OHTF)/Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon (PHFO); and, Portland City Commissioner Dan Saltzman.

Chair Cogen welcomed everyone for attending today's briefing.

Commissioner McKeel made opening remarks. She said it's essential that children are fed for them to learn and grow, both mentally and physically. This briefing will discuss the extent and consequences of childhood hunger in both the County and the state of Oregon. She talked about community partners and the County's CROPS program that provides over half of the organic produce to SnowCap in East Multnomah County.

Commissioner Kafoury made opening remarks, saying 13.7% of households in Oregon report reduced quality, variety or desirability of diet or uncertainty about having enough food for all household members. 6.1% of households report multiple instances of reduced food and skipped meals. She added that according to the Oregon Food Bank (OFB), 92,000 children eat meals from an emergency food bank each month. She said the SUN Community Schools program has expanded its program and increased summer food services, developed in-school emergency food pantries, and increased weekend food efforts. She introduced the presenters and talked about their background and efforts.

A video clip was shown by Ms. Whitney-Wise. Since the video failed midway through, she talked about the points the video made, including the quote by actor and activist Jeff Bridges regarding childhood hunger in the US: "If another country was doing this to our kids, we'd be at war"

Remarks were given by Ms. Morgan. She thanked the Board for the opportunity to participate today and recognized the work of the others testifying in the fight against hunger. She shared stories of neighbors dealing with hunger and said children in Multnomah County are disproportionately impacted by hunger. Children make up about 20% of the population, but about 34% of those eating emergency food from the OFB network. Requests for food boxes have increased by 13% since 2012, and 43% since the recession began in 2006. She discussed how hunger negatively impacts a child's academic performance, cognitive development, and physical and psychological health. She talked about the innovative

programs, like Harvest Share sites and food pantries at SUN Schools, that offer increased food distribution to better serve children and their families. Training is ongoing by health care communities' anti-hunger advocates to educate the health community and how to assess and help those children and families experiencing hunger. She acknowledged City, State and Federal programs for their crucial investment in OFB.

Remarks were given by Ms. Whitney-Wise. She discussed how many parents are working full-time and still living below the poverty line. PHFO works with partners to address the root causes of hunger and remove barriers to accessing programs. They coordinate the work of "Ending Hunger Before it Begins: Oregon's Call to Action." Their 2013 Legislative Agenda includes increasing economic stability, cultivating a stronger regional food system and improving the food assistance safety net. They share information about hunger and support the work of the Oregon Hunger Task Force (OHTF). OHTF acts as a statewide resource for Oregonians by developing policies, working to promote community awareness, and compile research. OHTF is made up of legislators, state agency representatives, community members and nonprofits.

Ms. Hayes talked about her background and work on poverty prevention and hunger reduction since she first learned of Oregon's high hunger rate during her run for the Oregon Legislature in 2002. She talked about Oregon's grand scale of need and how our communities are responding. She discussed how poverty affects not just individuals, but the future prosperity of the entire State, and how children who grow up in poverty statistically earn lower earnings as adults, have poorer health, and are more likely to be involved in the criminal justice system. She emphasized how society bears these costs through higher health care, police and incarceration expenditures and foregone economic activity. She said Oregon's failure to address hunger costs taxpayers \$2.1 billion annually; primarily due to health care costs associated with poor nutrition and educational losses for kids too hungry to concentrate on their studies.

Ms. Hayes discussed the Oregon Prosperity Initiative, and its aim to ensure families have access to critical resources. She stressed how vital it is to raise awareness of Oregon's tremendous network of food banks and affordable housing facilities. She said improvements must be made in our systems of education and health care and State funds must be prioritized for critical support programs.

Ms. Hayes said that effective steps need to be taken to address the systemic challenges of generational and situational poverty, including unemployment, lack of education, mental illness and substance abuse. She discussed poverty reduction strategies, such as the Ten Year State Budget Plan; Early Learning Council; and engaging the business community in developing entrepreneurial approaches to improving opportunities for people to achieve prosperity. She talked about what individuals can do and how she hopes to bring the KIVA program to Oregon to provide for micro-credit programs. She said in exploring Oregon solutions, they are focusing on several communities in-depth, to see what can be learned about a unified approach to lifting incomes, and providing a more secure future for employers and works.

Remarks were given by City Commissioner Saltzman. He discussed how the Portland Children's Levy has invested \$1 million in cost effective programs to help kids be successful in Portland since 2002. He said if the Levy is approved by voters on the May 2013 ballot, the

new version will add funding for children's hunger. The Levy funds four priority areas: (1) early childhood education, so that they arrive at school ready to learn; (2) child abuse prevention and intervention; (3) support programs for foster kids to help them be successful in school; and, (4) investment in after-school programs to help keep children safe.

Chair Cogen thanked Commissioner Saltzman for his leadership on renewing the Portland Children's Levy and adding child hunger as a category for grants. If the levy is renewed, this additional funding will have a tremendous impact on our partner agencies as they work to address the increasing need for supportive services including hunger relief.

The presenters responded to Board questions and comments.

The Chair and Commissioners thanked the presenters and acknowledged the work of the Oregon Food Bank, Oregon Hunger Task Force and Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

The minutes reflect the actions of the Board. For more detail, you are welcome to view the presentation material and/or video at: http://multnomah.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=3

Submitted by:
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Board of County Commissioners
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